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DI/USAF Contribution to NIE 27/1: "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions with Respect Taiwan"

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I. THE CHINESE COMMUNIST SITUATION

1. What Chinese Communist Forces are now in position for operations against Taiwan?

1. Ground Forces

No contribution

2. Air Forces

a. Strength

The Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) is estimated to have available a total of approximately 1700 combat aircraft, including about 130 of the North Korean Air Force (NKAFF) and approximately 900 jet fighters of undetermined subordination. This aggregate air strength is estimated to include the following: 900 jet fighters, 250 piston fighters, 160 ground attack, 240 light bombers and 150 2-engine transports of various types.

b. Disposition

It is estimated that currently the bulk of the aircraft available to the Chinese Communists are located in Northeastern China Proper and in Manchuria. Communist aircraft presently believed to be based nearest to Taiwan are the following: 37 jet fighters at Canton, 74 jet fighters at Hankow, 74 jet fighters and 40 piston fighters at Shanghai and 80 light bombers at Nanking. Of these, the light bombers

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are the only aircraft within striking distance of Taiwan. Accordingly, a major redeployment of aircraft by the Chinese Communists probably would be necessary before a major air offensive against Taiwan could be launched. On the other hand the Communists might elect to operate against Taiwan from established bases in Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow and Canton by staging aircraft through prepared airfields on the China mainland opposite Taiwan.

Sufficient usable airfields are available to the Chinese Communists on the China mainland within effective fighter and light bomber range of Taiwan. During the past two years an extensive airfield repair and facilities build-up program has been underway in China along the coastal belt from Shanghai southerly to Canton. Existing airfields are being improved and previous sites re-activated. This work has been principally under Soviet supervision. The 35 principal airfields, capable of supporting light bombers, within 500 nautical miles of Taiwan (the combat radius of the typical Soviet-type piston light bomber) may be grouped into these four complexes:

<u>Area</u>	<u>No. of Airfields</u>
Canton	6
Opposite Taiwan (Inland)	11
Opposite Taiwan (Coastal)	4
Shanghai-Nanking	<u>14</u>
Total	35

Of these airfields four, which are believed capable of supporting jet fighter operations, are located on the coast of the China mainland

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directly opposite Taiwan near the cities of Foochow, Amoy and Swatow. From these airfields the Communists probably could operate jet fighters over the Formosa Straits and Taiwan.

c. Combat Effectiveness

The combat potential and effectiveness of the Communist Air Forces in the China - Manchurian area have improved to the point where they now must be considered as a formidable force. Even by U.S. standards, this force is believed to have reached a fairly high state of training. Experience in Korea has demonstrated that the Communists are capable of successful day and limited night air interception. Although this air strength so far has been employed primarily in a defensive role, numerous reports of intensive training in air - ground attack, bombing, navigation and paratrooper activities indicate that the Chinese Communists are developing a significant air offensive capability. However, since Communist China lacks the capability by itself either to develop, or meet the logistic requirements for, an air force, and is dependent upon Soviet assistance, the combat potential and future development of the Communist Air Forces in China rest upon the emphasis which the Soviets place on their operations and continued development. Over-all air offensive capabilities of the Communist Air Forces in China probably will continue to increase since available evidence indicates that the expansion of the role of Communist air power in the Far East is of a continuing nature. Under conditions of prolonged air operations the ability of these air forces to maintain combat effectiveness also would be in direct proportion to the aid rendered by the Soviets.

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d. Airlift Capabilities

Chinese Communist airlift capacity is estimated to be sufficient to carry at least 2700 troops a distance of 500 nautical miles in a single operation. Since Chinese Communist paratrooper and airborne training on a fairly large scale has been reported, the possibility that the Chinese Communists can launch an airborne attack of appreciable magnitude is dependent only upon the acquisition of additional transport aircraft, since both para and airborne troops are believed available in sizeable numbers. Such additional transport aircraft could be readily supplied by the Soviet Union in the event the Communists decided to undertake such an airborne attack. Airfields on the mainland, within transport range of Taiwan, are sufficient to support large-scale airborne operations, if the Communists should elect to undertake them.

3. Naval Forces

No contribution.

- B. Under present circumstances (i.e., continuation of the war in Korea, present requirements for internal security, and present scale and nature of Chinese Communist commitment in Southeast Asia) what additional forces could the Chinese Communists make available for an assault on Taiwan?

It is believed that Communists, without an appreciable lessening of the present scale of air operations over North Korea, could make the following aircraft, excluding the NKAf, available for air operations

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against Taiwan by re-deploying such aircraft from present bases in North China and Manchuria: 120 piston fighters, 120 ground attack and 160 light bombers.

C. What gaps are apparent in Chinese Communist capabilities?

The CCAF as it is constituted today has formidable defensive capabilities but limited offensive capabilities. The rapid development of the CCAF is entirely due to Soviet assistance and the CCAF is dependent on the Soviet Union for logistical support, including aircraft, fuel supplies, armament and ammunition. The ability of the CCAF to develop and expand its capabilities for air operations is in direct proportion to the assistance given by the Soviets. It is within the Soviet capability to augment and re-equip the Chinese Communist air strength from the Soviet Air Forces in the Far East or elsewhere or from new Soviet production. It is estimated that the Soviet Far East Air Force currently has approximately 5,500 aircraft, including four-engine medium bombers and an increasing proportion of jet fighters. Within a relatively short period of time a portion of this air strength could be made available for operations in China.

Over-all air offensive capabilities of the CCAF probably will continue to be increased by the Soviets since available evidence indicates that the expansion of the role of Communist air power in the Far East is of a continuing nature.

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D. On the basis of points A, B, and C above, what could be the scale and nature of a maximum Chinese Communist effort within the next six months?

1. Strength and Composition

It is estimated that the Chinese Communists, without appreciably lessening the present scale of air operations over North Korea, could re-deploy the following presently available aircraft for air support of a maximum Chinese Communist effort against Taiwan within the next six months: 185 jet fighters, 160 piston fighters, 120 ground attack and 240 light bombers. This air strength could be augmented by additional aircraft furnished by the Soviet Union within this period.

2. Most feasible season for utilization of this force.

It is believed that the determining weather factors will be those favoring large-scale sea operations across the Taiwan Straits rather than those directly related to air operations. It is believed that the Chinese Communists, if they decided to make an assault on Taiwan, would be most likely to attack in the spring or summer, when weather and sea conditions in the Taiwan Straits are most favorable.

3. Capability for achieving surprise.

It is believed that a limited air attack against Taiwan could be conducted by the CCAF from present bases, staging through advance airfields opposite Taiwan, with a maximum degree of surprise. However, it is believed that further indications (such as additional re-deployment of aircraft and stockpiling of aviation fuel and supplies at mainland airfields opposite Taiwan) would be available prior to the

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launching of a major sustained air offensive by the Communists against Taiwan.

4. Capability for reinforcement and resupply.

Communist China does not possess an aviation industry and is wholly dependent on imports for aircraft frames, engines, spare parts, and other aviation equipment. In addition, Communist China is dependent on imports for 100 per cent of her avgas requirement of 140,000 metric tons per year. Communist China is probably able to produce at least a part of her jet fuel requirements of 60,000 metric tons annually, but no exact estimate of jet fuel production capabilities is possible. Communist China, therefore, is virtually completely dependent upon the Soviet Union and her satellites for both aviation equipment and supplies. However, the Soviet Union and her satellites have the potential to reinforce and resupply the CCAF. Since aviation equipment and supplies must be imported from the Soviet Union, it is reasonable to assume that CCAF air operations against Taiwan, with the greater logistical requirements incidental thereto, will necessitate a proportionate decrease in the capabilities of over-burdened lines of communication into China from the Soviet Union, and from North China into the South China coastal area opposite Taiwan, to transport other necessary military materials. However, if the Communists place a sufficiently high priority upon importations for the reinforcement and resupply of the CCAF, operations of the CCAF against Taiwan would not necessarily be affected by this dependency on imports and the limited lines of communication available. Adequate stockpiling of aviation equipment and supplies in South China in advance could

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alleviate much of this logistic difficulty for the CCAF in the event of sustained air operations against Taiwan.

E. What are Chinese Communist capabilities for infiltration of Taiwan prior to the assault?

The CCAF has the capability of attempting clandestine drops of personnel and/or supplies, prior to a large scale amphibious assault, in connection with attempts by the Communists to infiltrate Taiwan. In addition, the CCAF has the capability to transport and drop paratroopers on Taiwan to sabotage and destroy key points on lines of communication and military installations immediately prior to such an assault.

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II. The Chinese Nationalist Situation

A. What is the strength, disposition, composition, and combat effectiveness of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force?

The Chinese Nationalist Air Force (CNAF) has 320 aircraft in tactical units. Of these 118 are piston fighters and 36 light bombers and the balance are transport and reconnaissance aircraft. All these aircraft are U.S. World War II types. There are no jet aircraft in the CNAF. The over-all personnel strength of the CNAF totals 67,393 including 1628 trained active pilots.

The aircraft of the CNAF are deployed on Taiwan airfields. Adequate air facilities exist on this island to accomodate all tactical units of the CNAF with several undeveloped bases which could be used as dispersal fields. Taiwan has a total of 19 air facilities (including 2 seaplane stations) in various stages of use at this time. In addition, the CNAF has an airfield on the off-shore island of Quemoy (Chinmon) near the mainland coastal city of Amoy.

The combat effectiveness of the CNAF is considered to be very low in relation to the CCAF. Principal deficiencies of the CNAF at the present time are obsolescent aircraft types, lack of combat experience and training, poor maintenance and shortage of equipment and spare parts. Offensively, the CNAF has some capability to conduct limited operations of short duration against the Chinese mainland if opposed only by piston type CCAF aircraft; however, this CNAF offensive capability would be reduced to a negligible level if the CCAF employed presently available jet fighter aircraft types. Defensively, the CNAF is not considered capable of providing an effective air defense for Taiwan against air attacks the CCAF could mount from the China mainland.

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B. What are the factors in the political and economic situation on

Taiwan that affect the capabilities of the CNAF? How do these factors affect the CNAF?

The Commanding General of the CNAF, General Chou Chih Jou, is also Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese Nationalist Ministry of National Defense. The political power and prestige of General Chou is the reason why he holds these positions concurrently rather than any particular preferential CNAF politico-military position or regular rotation policy. Due to the efforts of General Chou, the CNAF suffers loss from the influence of political control than the other armed services. The general level of education and background of CNAF personnel, combined with a good esprit de corps, causes the CNAF to easily lead the other services in morale, technical know-how and offensive spirit. In addition, since the arrival in May 1951 of the U.S. Military Aid Advisory Group the morale of the CNAF has been boosted noticeably. Political factors, therefore, currently appear to favor the development of the CNAF.

Nationalist China alone, from the economic standpoint, could not develop or meet the requirements of an air force of any significance. Prior to the allocation of U.S. military aid to the CNAF, one of its most glaring deficiencies consisted in a shortage of equipment and spare parts necessary for maintaining its obsolescent aircraft and a serious fuel shortage which prevented maximum utilization of available combat type aircraft. The air section of the MAAG now in Taiwan is currently investigating these deficiencies with a view to their correction. Through U. S. military aid these and other equipment and logistic deficiencies of the CNAF should gradually be overcome. Accordingly, in view of such U.S. aid, Chinese Nationalist economic difficul-

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ties should not have a significant adverse effect on the development of the CNAF.

C. What is the scope and nature of the Chinese Communist subversive effort on Taiwan? How does this effort affect CNAF capabilities to defend Taiwan?

The Chinese Nationalist Government has taken far-reaching steps to guard against Chinese Communist sabotage on Taiwan through strict surveillance and drastic methods. Nevertheless, the Communists appear to have maintained some underground organization on the island which might be capable of sabotage of lines of communications and aviation installations.

It is believed that personnel of the CNAF are generally less susceptible to subversion than members of the other armed services. Among the factors making for a higher resistance to Communism among the personnel of the CCAF are carefully selected personnel with a superior standard of education and intelligence, and good morale fostered by better food, pay, treatment, and easier living conditions.

Chinese Communist subversive activity on Taiwan, therefore, should not significantly affect CNAF defensive capabilities.

III. Prospects For Success of a Chinese Communist Assault on Taiwan.

A. What are CNAF capabilities to defend Taiwan?

1. Against a maximum Chinese Communist effort?

The CNAF is not considered capable of providing an effective air defense for Taiwan against air attacks the CCAF could mount from the China mainland in conjunction with a maximum Chinese Communist assault against the island. Principal deficiencies in present CNAF defensive capabilities to repel possible CCAF air attacks are the obsolescent type of fighter

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aircraft available for interception, inadequate early warning and aircraft control systems, logistic shortages, and antiquated anti-aircraft defense equipment.

Aircraft available for defense are obsolescent U.S. World War II fighter types. Due to lack of spare parts and poor maintenance CNAF air operations could be sustained at Maximum levels only for a period of short duration. Although the CNAF has acquired and installed some U.S. World War II type radar, the CNAF is not considered to possess at this time an effective early warning radar net or aircraft intercept system. At present no ground controlled interception (GCI) as such is practiced by the CNAF and there is a serious time lag in transmitting information from the early warning radar station to the pilot of the intercepting aircraft. The CNAF is not considered to have an effective anti-aircraft defense system and its anti-aircraft equipment consists of an assortment of obsolete non-standard weapons with limited ammunition stocks.

2. Against limited surprise attacks?

The CNAF is not considered capable of providing an effective air defense for Taiwan against a limited surprise air attack by the CCAF from the China mainland. The CNAF is vulnerable to a surprise attack due to the proximity of its air bases to airfields which the CCAF could use for launching or staging such an air attack, and by reason of the deficiencies in the Taiwan air defenses. Such deficiencies are due primarily to the availability only of obsolescent aircraft for interception, inadequate early warning system, lack of ground controlled interception and poor anti-aircraft equipment. It is believed that the CCAF, after redeployment, possesses the capability to neutralize the CNAF by such a limited surprise air attack. It

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is noted that at the present time a considerable number of Communist piston fighters and light bombers are based in the Shanghai-Nanking area and that the Communists, by utilizing only these aircraft, possess a current capability to launch escorted light bomber attacks against Taiwan, staging the shorter range aircraft through advance prepared airfields opposite Taiwan, without delays incident to redeployment. Such an attack could inflict serious damage to CNAF aircraft on the ground if accomplished with a maximum degree of surprise.

B. What is the scope and nature of assistance the CNAF would require for the successful air defense of Taiwan?

The CNAF has the organizational structure and necessary personnel, including in excess of 1600 trained active pilots, to absorb and utilize additional equipment to improve its effectiveness as a defensive force. Such additional equipment alone, however, would not be sufficient to enable the CNAF to defend Taiwan against Communist air attacks within the next six months. It is believed that the CNAF could not, within the next six months, provide an effective air defense of Taiwan and achieve and maintain air superiority over the island, against attacks in force by the CCAF, even with the assistance of U.S. military aid under the supervision of the MAAG, in the absence of direct U.S. participation in the air defense of Taiwan.

Currently the U.S. is furnishing air aid to the CNAF under the mutual defense assistance programs and has sent a Military Aid Advisory Group, containing a large air section, to supervise this aid with a view to increasing the combat value of the CNAF. Spare parts and related aviation equipment are being supplied initially to Taiwan and, next in priority, the presently organized fighter groups will be re-equipped with approximately 225 F-47

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piston fighters during 1952. One squadron (about 27 F-84 jet fighters are programmed for 1953 provided funds are then available (delivery date unknown). It is anticipated that the effect of this U.S. aid will, within a period of two years, cause the combat value of the CNAF to rise from its present low point to a point where its combat potential will make the CNAF an effective component of an integrated defense organization. Within the coming year the CNAF defensive capabilities should, as the result of such U.S. aid, be augmented by increased early warning radar effectiveness, a more workable and adequate fighter control system and a sufficient reserve in aircraft and spare parts to enable the CNAF to sustain defensive operations for a considerable period of time.

IV. How do the Following Factors Influence Chinese Communist Actions With Respect to Taiwan?

A. Over-all Soviet Policy.

The Chinese Communist regime has demonstrated its ideological subservience to over-all Soviet or international Communist policy, particularly respecting actions outside of China Proper. In addition, the Chinese Communists are almost completely dependent upon the Soviet Union for continuing technical and material assistance in order to acquire control of Taiwan. Although over-all Soviet policy certainly favors eventual Communist acquisition of Taiwan for strategic reasons, it might well give such acquisition a relatively lower priority than Chinese Communist considerations alone might dictate.

B. Present U.S. policy vis-a-vis Taiwan.

The present U.S. policy of protecting Taiwan from Communist attack and of giving military aid to the Chinese Nationalist forces acts as a strong deterrent to Chinese Communist military action against Taiwan but also

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makes the island--as a potential anti-Communist military base--a still more important prize for the Chinese Communists.

C. Possible U.S. counter-action (e.g. attacks against mainland targets)

As long as Korean hostilities continue, the presence of U.S. naval forces in Taiwan waters with publicly known orders to resist Communist military action against the island will probably deter the Chinese Communists from initiating such action. In the event of a cessation of the Korean hostilities, however, this present deterrent would presumably cease to be operative. Under these circumstances, the influence of possible U.S. counter-action upon Chinese Communist actions respecting Taiwan would depend upon the degree to which the Chinese Communists (and the Soviet) were convinced of the certainty of such U.S. counter-action.

D. The Korean situation

1. Tactical

A continuation of Korean air operations on the present scale would not, of itself, prevent the Chinese Communists from employing sufficient air strength against Taiwan to acquire and maintain air superiority in that area against presently committed opposing air forces.

2. Truce negotiations

The truce negotiations have not had the effect of reducing the capability of the CCAF for action against Taiwan; on the contrary, the CCAF strength has steadily increased during the period of the truce talks. As long as the Communists desire to continue the negotiations, however, political considerations would probably militate against the employment of air strength or other armed forces against Taiwan.

E. Possible reactions in non-Communist areas in the Far East.

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It is estimated that reactions in non-Communist areas in the Far East to Chinese Communist military action against Taiwan, although at least partially unfavorable, would not constitute a deterrent to the taking of such action.

V. What are the Indications of Chinese Communist Intentions with Respect to Taiwan?

A. Military preparations

Available intelligence on Chinese Communist military preparations gives ~~no~~ evidence of a Chinese Communist intention to launch an early attack on Taiwan. There have been some ground force movements along the east China coast and some movement of jet fighter and light bomber aircraft from Manchuria and North China. These movements, to such rear areas as Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow, and Canton could well be in preparation for a future attack on Taiwan. An announced objective of the Chinese Communists during 1952 is the capture of Nationalist held islands along the China coast. This could be in preparation of an invasion of Taiwan, or could be for defense of the mainland in that it would deny the Nationalists bases for conducting guerrilla warfare and bases for any contemplated assault of the mainland. A usually reliable source reports that the airfield at Swatow has been in a disused state for a long time, but there is evidence now of it being rehabilitated. Two hundred Russians reportedly are in the area to rebuild and extend the airfield. Other unconfirmed reports suggest further reconstruction of airfields on the China coast adjacent to Taiwan is in process.

B. Domestic propaganda

C. Foreign propaganda

D. UN negotiations

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E. Other

No contribution.

VI. What are Chinese Communist Intentions with Respect to Taiwan?

Available intelligence on Chinese Communist military air preparations gives no evidence of a Chinese Communist intention to launch an imminent large-scale air attack against Taiwan. However, the known redeployment of certain air units from the Korean theater to potential rear base areas in China Proper and the estimated availability of additional air elements for redeployment may indicate a Chinese Communist intention to launch future air operations against Taiwan which could be accomplished with little warning.

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